

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An optical pickup comprising:

a light source for emitting a laser beam;

an optical system which converges the laser beam emitted  
5 from the light source; and

an optical element having a function of increasing a  
numerical aperture of the optical system,

wherein the optical pickup performs at least one of  
recording and reproducing information on a recording medium by  
10 using the laser beam from the light source while the optical  
element is brought in contact with or in close to the  
recording medium, and the optical element comprises a surface  
portion facing the recording medium and a contamination-  
preventing structure provided on the surface portion, and

15 wherein the contamination-preventing structure of the  
optical element includes a contaminant attracting portion  
which is provided on an area excepting and neighboring an  
optically effective area on the surface portion of the optical  
element, and which attracts contaminant.

20 2. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the  
optical element comprises a solid immersion lens.

3. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the  
contaminant attracting portion comprises a rough surface which  
is rougher than the optically effective area on the surface  
5 portion of the optical element.

4. The optical pickup according to claim 3, wherein the  
rough surface is formed by one of chemically and physically  
etching the area except the optically effective area on the  
10 surface portion of the optical element.

5. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the  
contaminant attracting portion comprises a plurality of  
grooves.